

Metropolitan Homelessness Full Commission Meeting

Thursday, January 7, 2016
at the Randee Rogers Center
1419 Rosa L Parks Blvd.

Present: Liz Allen Fey, Renee Pratt, Kirby Davis, Wendell Segroves, Phil Duke, Marvin Cox, Angie Hubbard, Charles Strobel, Ellen Zinkiewicz, Tom Turner, Angie Thompson, Tara Ladd

Staff: William Connelly, Judy Tackett, Karri Simpson, Leslie Head, Deon Trotter

The meeting began at 9:30 a.m.

Minutes:

The minutes of November 6, 2015 were approved.

Opening Conversation:

Liz Allen Fey, who has been appointed as the new chair by Mayor Megan Barry, introduced herself, as well as thanking Diane Kuhn for all her hard work. With years of experience and involvement, Liz is excited to serve and ready to get to work. The discussion was opened with a question to commissioners asking why they serve:

- Phil Duke: He has always been interested in homelessness and was a member of the Key Alliance.
- Kirby Davis: He promised Will Connelly he would help if Will moved back to Nashville
- Tara Ladd: to answer legal questions
- Tom Turner: To represent the interests of downtown and those homeless consumers
- Angie Thompson: To represent the Department of Health
- Marvix Cox: To represent the Metro Action Commission, where they help those in poverty
- Dayna Lovelady: To represent the homeless community as she was formerly homeless
- Ellen Zinc- To represent the Career Advancement Center
- Wendell Seagroves: Having experienced homelessness he would like to see homelessness ended, criminalization ended, and he cares
- Angie Hubbard- To represent MDHA and the Community Department which oversee grants to assist the homeless
- Renee Pratt- The Metro Homelessness Commission is under Social Services so she is required to be here
- Will Connelly- Ending homelessness had been a personal goal of his and when Kirby (and others) asked him to move back, he knew the commission could be more effective and took on the challenge.
- Charles Strobel- He wanted to participate in something that had never occurred in the history of Nashville- there was no city wide conversation generated from the Mayor's Office until the Commission was formed.

Financial Report and Budget:

Lisa Rickets reported that everything is on track for the Metro Homelessness Commission budget.

Several donations have been received for How's Nashville.

Renee Pratt stated that the Mayor stated they will not ask for a specific cut for the 2016/2017 budget but are more interested in coming in and having conversations about the needs of the department and their three year plan.

The How's Nashville budget is listed as "September," which is a typo and should state November.

There were no questions.

Focus Strategies Update

Will Connelly stated that while the goal was to have the final report back in December, with the holidays that was tougher than that already ambitious goal. The Focus Strategies team is confident that the report will be ready on January 15. Once he receives the report, a joint meeting between the MHC executive committee and CoC governance will be called to discuss next steps, particularly in regards to the governance structure.

The report will be presented at the next Commission meeting as well.

Encampment Task Force Update

Steven Samra had to step down from the leadership role, but Wendell Seagrove will continue to serve. Liz Allen Fey is wondering what's the goal, scope of work, deliverable, and timeline for this task force. She feels the task force is looking at both short and long term recommendations around encampments, how that fits into the goal of permanent housing, and what implications that has.

Will Connelly stated that Judith Tackett will help to organize and manage the meetings, so that the timeline goals can be met. Goals include: developing recommendations around unauthorized encampments, as well as recommendations on whether a sanctioned camp should be authorized. April is the deadline for residents of Ft. Negley to find alternative housing, so hearing recommendations from this task force before April would be ideal. Wendell is open to having another commissioner serve as co-lead with him.

Discussion and questions regarding encampments ensued.

The task force will report out during the March meeting.

Moment of Silence

Announcements

Will Connelly stated that it is a challenge to find housing and we must discuss it, but must also celebrate that in 2015 the community collectively housed almost 1,000 people through the How's Nashville effort. This is an increase in housing placements from the year prior. Even though the challenges are very real our community is making an impact. Veterans homelessness has not been ended yet but our community can identify 200 veterans on the streets and shelters and the goal is within reach. The SOAR program helped around 100 people to acquire disability benefits, and Park Center and Mental Health Coop added more outreach workers, housing navigators and case managers, and are working with about 100 people at any given time. Leslie Head was hired to focus on how to connect hospitals to the service system. A former commissioner became mayor. A CES pilot project for families was created with many community partners. Overall 2015 was a year of great successes.

Angie Hubbard announced that in late 2012/early 2013 funds were awarded to NLCDC and they created 8 units of permanent housing, which have recently received the Aubrey Nelson national award.

Will Connelly invited everyone to attend the next Nashville Coalition for the Homeless meeting, on Thursday, January 21st, at 9 a.m. at which he will be presenting on the state of homelessness.

Public Hearing

Howard Allen- He thanks the Metro Homelessness Commission for helping with the annual memorial. He stated that there have been several articles in the newspaper recently about homelessness. The Nashville Scene included those who have passed on their annual list. Howard Allen is currently experiencing homelessness and good things don't come to people who wait, they come to people who agitate- so he is going to agitate. He doesn't feel outside consultants need to be brought in and MDHA doesn't need more power than they already have. Churches need to form a housing agency, as well as the private sector. When this becomes a "we" thing, and not an MDHA process, more things will get done. The Homelessness Commission could be changed though so that they receive funding to build affordable housing. Currently the Commission is just symbolic with no power. Everyone needs a place that they call home. We need to go to NYC so we can see a real city and how the system works.

Barry Hobbs- There are roughly 2,000 homeless people in this city and county and we can help them and others who are poor. We have made progress but not enough. For the four years starting in 2016, ending in 2019, raise 40 million for affordable housing so that we can end homelessness by 2020. If rent is just \$100/month then they should be able to pay it, if it is over that amount then they pay the first \$100 and the rest is subsidized. This city has come a long way in his lifetime of 59 years, we need to unite the state local and federal governments, the churches, and put all the money in the same pot and buy and build homes to end homelessness.

John Zurker- He is the state and local chair of housing with NAACP and part of the Caycee Homes development. The whole city is under development, including public housing, but money for new development for housing for the poor needs to be brought to the table. Housing developments are getting out of the business of building homes for the poor. If you are a Christian you should be commissioned by God to do the right thing. Look at what is really going on and how we need to address this situation of homelessness.

Lindsey Glenn Krinks- Wants to commend everyone that the community has housed 1000 people in one of the worst housing crises in Nashville. But for each housing placement that means that someone else isn't getting that unit. NOAH and A Voice are leading great policy efforts but the focus is on workforce housing; policy recommendations for those living on the streets aren't being brought to the Mayor's office. Through her research she found that the waiting list for Section 8 voucher as of December is 14,491. There are 15% less landlords taking voucher, which means that 20% of the vouchers issued expired before they were used- which is a third of the vouchers issued. Can we get tax breaks for landlords who take section 8? How can we get more landlords and developers to take section 8? Another camp is closing today as well.

Samuel Lester- Stated that there were 77 deaths of those who are homeless or previously homeless in 2015. Winter is now upon Nashville and there are several elderly people living in camps. Shelters are only opening at 25 degrees and RITI is full by early evening and many won't go into the Nashville Rescue Mission, but they will go into other shelters if available. During cold weather outreach they found dozens of people who needed shelter. Healthcare of the Homeless recommends that under 40 degrees people should get into shelter. It does cost metro to open a shelter, but the cost of indigent burials are 8 times that. It is our responsibility of our community to care for these people. Woodbine provided shelter

for 120 men last year but this year this resource isn't available. They can provide beds and volunteers but they need space and a temperature range safer than 25 degrees.

Barry Hobbs- the 2,000 plus figure he gave came from the Tennessean. Also go to the ticked off section in the Nashville Today and read the two op-eds on homelessness.

Howard Allen wants to know if they found out if the sellers of James Robertson backed out of the deal?

Liz Allen Fey asked for commissioners to reflect on what they heard during the public comment section. Conversation ensued.

The next full Commission meeting is Friday, March 4, 2016. at 9:30 a.m. at the Sonny Weset Conference room in the Howard Office Building.

The next Executive Committee meeting is on Tuesday, February 9, 2016 at 8:30 a.m. at a location to be determined.

With no other comments, all approved and the meeting was adjourned at 10:43 a.m.